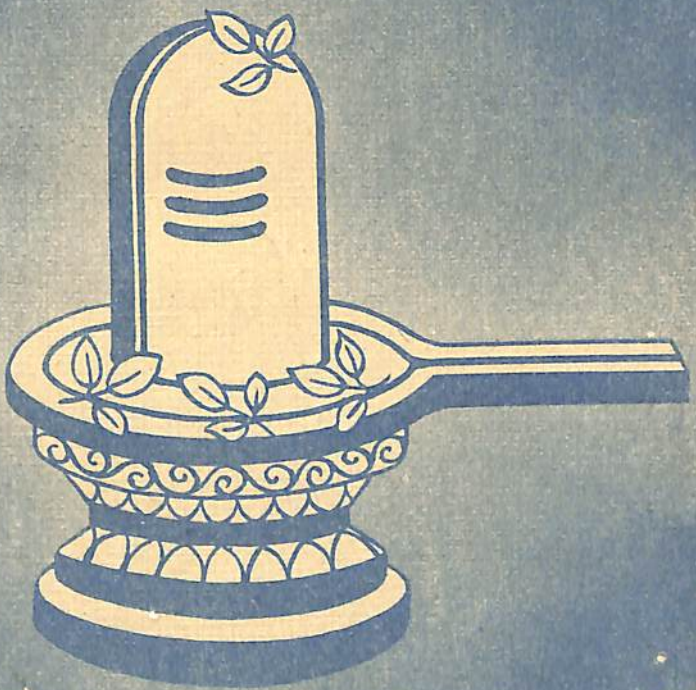
FORGIVE ME



Commentary by
Swami Chinmayananda
on Śaṅkara's Invocation to Lord Śiva
ŚIVĀPARĀDHAKṢAMĀPAṆASTOTRAM

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டாக்டர் சின்மயானந்தர் 1340:
அதிகம் 30 ல
இலவசமாக வழங்கப்படுகிறது
7th World Book Fair
New Delhi
12 Feb 86

For free distribution in Yoga

Published by
CENTRAL CHINMAYA MISSION TRUST
Sandeepany Sadhanalalya
Powai Park Drive Powai, Bombay - 400072.

First Indian Edition : January 1982.
Copies : 25000

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Cover design by Parkar Arts, Bombay

Printed by Sri M.K. Kulkarni at Displaycraft,
17 & 18, Block 'G', Ansa Industrial Estate,
Sakivihar Road, Sakinaka, Bombay-400 072.

FORGIVE ME

ŚIVĀPARĀDHAKṢAMĀPAṆASTOTRAM

INTRODUCTION

Man is essentially a being full of love and in his life is often highly emotional. In fact, no purely intellectual being exists. If there were one, he would be an abominable devil of a man, no doubt perniciously efficient and diabolically competent. There would be no sweetness of culture in such an individual. In fact, he would be a shattered personality, disabled from living joyously because of his lopsided development.

In Śaṅkara's life and works we find a man lovingly intelligent and intelligently devoted to Truth. One of Śaṅkara's famous and popular invocations to the Lord is his "Appeal for Forgiveness," sent out from his melting heart in

deep devotion to the sacred altar of Truth, which is consecrated here as Lord Śiva, the great Jagadīśvara (Lord of the Universe).

While giving a running commentary upon the pain-ridden march of an individual from the womb to the tomb, Śaṅkara makes, as it were, twelve stops at which to fall down in prostration to beg forgiveness of the Lord for all one's wretched sins of the past, known and unknown, born of both commission and omission. Saṅkara, the father of Advaita Vedanta, who spent his lifetime propagating the theme of the Upaniṣads, is here demonstrating to his followers that with devotion alone can the rubbish heap of our gross, sensuous *vāsanās*[1] be trucked out and burned down. This is the only way to purify our impure minds, which are endlessly dancing in lustful agitation and running about in sensuous fields of endeavor, vainly seeking therein total satisfaction.

The wise student of Vedanta, who has studied the Upaniṣads and the Gītā and who is striving to become established in spiritual *sādhanā*,[2] has no demand for any worldly gain through the grace of the Lord. The student only seeks the Lord's help in rendering his *vāsanās* null and void through an act of divine forgiveness by Him.

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[1] *Vāsanās* are the tendencies born out of our past thoughts and actions, our "hang-ups," which determine the contours of our present personality.

[2] *Sādhanā* is any discipline undertaken for the purpose of spiritual growth.

The Lord neither judges nor forgives. But when a student realizes the folly of his false expectations and ardently expresses his wish to come out of their strangulating grip, the poignancy of his own powerful thoughts — *saṅkalpas* — blesses him; the negative *vāsanās*, products of his past actions undertaken in ignorance, automatically whither away from his personality composition.

In his "Appeal for Forgiveness," the philosopher and poet in Śaṅkara have both merged with the ardent devotee that he evidently was.

श्रीचिन्मयाष्टकम्

ओंकारसूनमकरन्दरस पिबन्तं
अध्यात्म भृंगमवनीतल भाग्यशृंगं।
आनन्दपूर्णमतिं अप्रतिमप्रभावं
श्री चिन्मयं गुरुवरं हृदि भावयामि। (1)

उन्मीलदम्बुजदलायतमुग्ध नेत्रं
उत्तप्त निर्मल सुवर्ण समानगात्रं।
उन्निद्र भक्त जनमानस राजहंसं
श्री चिन्मयं गुरुवरं हृदि भावयामि॥ (2)

आयामरम्य भुजदण्ड गंभीररुपं
मायान्धकार विनिवारण भद्रदीपं
मुद्रा दरिद्र करुणावरुणालयांसं
श्री चिन्मयं गुरुवरं हृदि भावयामि॥ (3)

धावल्यमञ्जुलमृदुस्मितकान्तिपूरं —
विस्मारिताखिल पदानत दुःखभारं ।
आताम्र शोभन परिच्छद संवृतांगं
श्री चिन्मयं गुरुवरं हृदि भावयामि ॥ (4)

विज्ञानसारवचनामृत जह्नु कन्या
निश्शेष धौत भवकिल्बषमुन्नतांसं ।
श्री खण्ड मण्डित मनोज्ञ विशालफालं
श्री चिन्मयं गुरु वरं हृदि भावयामि ॥ (5)

सन्दीपनीति भुवन प्रथितं प्रशान्तं —
अध्यासितं परममंगलमालयाग्रयं ।
श्रीमन्तपोवन तपोधनु शिष्यवर्यं
श्री चिन्मयं गुरुवरं हृदि भावयामि ॥ (6)

कल्याणशीतलकटाक्षनिरीक्षणेन
तापत्रय प्रशमनैकपरं सुधीरं ।
प्रज्ञानवारिधितरंग विहारलोल
श्री चिन्मयं गुरुवरं हृदि भावयामि ॥ (7)

नानापुराण निगमागम तत्वविज्ञं
साक्षात्कृत प्रणवसारमुदारभावं ।
संसार घोरतर कानन दाव वह्निं
श्री चिन्मयं गुरुवरं हृदि भावयामि ॥ (8)

FORGIVE ME

शिवापराधक्षमापनस्तोत्रम्

ŚIVĀPARĀDHAKṢAMĀPAṆASTOTRAM

1

आदौ कर्मप्रसङ्गात् कलयति कलुषं मातृकुक्षौ स्थितं मां
विण्मूत्रामेध्यमध्ये क्वथयति नितरां जाठरो जातवेदाः ।
यद्यद् वै तत्र दुःखं व्यथयति नितरां शक्यते केन वक्तुं
क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्रीमहादेव शम्भो ॥ १ ॥

ädau karmaprasangätkalayati kalusam mätṛkuksau sthitam mäm
vinmüträmedhyamadhye kvathayati nitaräm jätharo jätavedäh
yadyadvai tatra duhkham vyathayati nitaram śakyate kena vaktum
ksantavyo me' parädhah śiva siva siva bhoh śrimahädeva sambho

आदौ - ädau - in the beginning; कर्मप्रसङ्गात् - karma-prasangät - due to karma; विण्मूत्र अमेध्य मध्ये - vinmütra amedhya madhye - in the midst of urine and excreta; मातृ कुक्षौ - mätr kuksau - in the womb of mother; स्थितं माम् - sthitam mäm - me, who was staying; कलयति - kalayati - makes me go through (suffer); कलुषम् kalusam - this filth; जाठरः जातवेदाः jatharah jatavedah - the digestive fire; नितरां nitaram - always; क्वथयति kvathayati - afflicts (boils); तत्र tatra - there;

यत् यत् वै yat yat vai - whatever; दु:खम् duḥkham - pain; नितराम् nitarām - constantly; व्यथयति माम् vyathayati - afflicts (mām - me); तत् सर्वम् (tat sarvam - all this); केन kena - by whom; वक्तुं vaktum - to tell; शक्यते śakyate - is possible; शिव शिव शिव भो श्रीं महादेव शभो siva siva siva bhoh śrimahadeva śambho O siva, Mahadeva, Sambhu; मे me - my; अपराध: aparadhaḥ - sin; क्षन्तव्य: ksantavyaḥ - is to be forgiven (by You)

After the death of my last incarnation, under the compulsions of my *karma-vāsanās*, at the fag end of my experiences in different levels of existence, I came here, first, perhaps, as a desire in my father's heart, then slipped down into his seeds, and thus reached my mother's womb. There, having formed into a rudimentary shape, a fetus, I grew slowly into a recognizable form in some seven or eight months' time. Consciousness then dawned in me: I became an individualized ego, the unique entity "I" possessing a sense of doership and enjoyership.

I suffered the indignity of living in my mother's within, in the vicinity of her intestinal filth, silently enduring the heat of her digestive system and the continuous rumbling of her body's workings. For a full nine months and nine days I suffered thus, without choice, before I emerged out amid the suffocative discomfort of painful squeezes and strong crushings.

All this happened to me due to the *vāsānas* born out of my selfish actions in the past.

Beloved Lord! Dear Parameśvara! Whatever faults I may have committed in the past, forgive them all, O All-Merciful One!

Forgive me. Forgive me. May I never again get condemned to fall into another womb!

II

बाल्ये दुःखातिरेको मललुलितवपुः स्तन्यपाने पिपासा
नो शक्तश्चेन्द्रियेभ्यो भवगुणजनिता जन्तवो मां तुदन्ति ।
नानारोगादिदुःखाद्रुदनपरवशः शङ्करं न स्मरामि ।
क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्रीमहादेव शम्भो ॥ २ ॥

bälye duhkhätireko malalulitavapuḥ stanyapäne pipäsä
no śaktaścendriyebhyo bhava guṇajanitä jantavo mäṁ tudanti
nänärogädiduḥkhädrudanaparavaśaḥ śankaraṁ na smarämi
kṣantavyo me'parädhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhoḥ śrîmahädeva śambho

बाल्ये balye - in early childhood; दुःख अतिरेकः duḥkha atirekah - there is excessive pain; मल लुलित वपुः mala-lulita-vapuh - being the one with a body moving in filth; स्तन्यपाने पिपासा stanyapāne pipāsā - there is desire for drinking mother's milk; 'न उ इन्द्रियेभ्यः शक्तः na u indriyebhyah śaktaḥ - not with capable sense organs; भव गुण जनिताः जन्तवः bhava guna janitāḥ jantavaḥ - beings born out of the multiplicity of the world (attributes of the five

great elements); मां mām - me; तुदन्ति tudanti - afflict; नाना रोगादि दु:खादुदन परवश: (सन्) nana-rogadiduḥkhatrudana-paravaśaḥ (san) - being totally dependent (on others) due to the intense sorrow of many diseases; शङ्करं śaṅkaraṁ - Siva; न स्मरामि na smarāmi - I don't think; क्षन्तव्य: (ksantavyaḥ etc - see verse 1)

When I had fully developed within my mother's womb and to my sorrow mercilessly wrenched out of the security of its shelter, I emerged suddenly into this strange world to suffer the crushing weight of the atmosphere around me. I screamed. What else could I do?

Thereafter, no one could truly estimate the amount of suffering I had to undergo — innumerable tragic events comprising a catalogue of miseries:

All through my infancy I often had to lie in my own filth. When I was hungry and thirsty for my mother's milk, I was often disappointed for long periods of time as I waited for my mother to fathom my need. I could express my despair only with shrieking cries of utter helplessness.

Though I wanted to get up and run about — alas! — my tiny limbs had no strength for it. I had no defense against ants and other insects when they crawled over me and bit hungrily at my tender skin. My limbs had no ability then even to drive them away. Many kinds of diseases pestered me from time to time. I could explain my discomforts to no one, nor did I know the remedy for my sorrows.

All that I could do was cry, and again cry — until my throat became parched.

Even at such times, due to the power of my past sinful lives, the thought of the Lord would never spring in my heart.

All my sins, which reach me thus to provide me with endless sorrows, please forgive — forgive them all, O All-Merciful One!

Forgive me. Forgive me. Besides Your all-forgiving grace, I have no other protection.

III

प्रौढोऽहं यौवनस्थो विषयविषधरैः पञ्चभिर्मर्मसन्धौ
दष्टो नष्टो विवेकः सुतधनयुवतिस्वादसौख्ये निषण्णः ।
शैवीचिन्ताविहीनं मम हृदयमहो मानगर्वाधिरूढं ।
क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्रीमहादेव शम्भो ॥ ३ ॥

prauḍho 'haṁ yauvanastho viṣayaviṣadharaiḥ
pañcabhirmarmasandhau
daṣṭo naṣṭo vivekaḥ sutadhanayuvatisvādasaukhye niṣaṇṇaḥ
śaivī cintāvihīnaṁ mama hṛdayamaho mānagarvādhirūḍhaṁ
kṣantavyo me'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhoḥ śrīmahādeva śambho

अहं aham - I; प्रौढ: prauḍhaḥ - being an adult; यौवनस्थ: yauvanasthaḥ - being in the prime of youth;विषयविषधरै: पञ्चभि: मर्म सन्धौ दष्ट: viṣaya-viṣadharaiḥ pancabhiḥ marma sandhau daṣṭaḥ - am bitten by the five sense organs that carry the poison of the sense objects; विवेक: नष्ट: vivekaḥ naṣṭaḥ - my capacity to discriminate is lost; सूत धन युवति स्वाद सौख्ये निषण्ण:suta-dhana-yuvati-svāda-saukhye

niṣaṇṇaḥ - established in the pleasure of enjoying progeny, wealth, and woman; मम हृदयम् mama hṛdayam - my heart; चिन्ता विहीनम् cintā-vihīnam - free from thought; शैवी śaivī - in the Lord; अहो aho - alas; मान गर्वाधि रूढं मम हृदयम् māna-garvādhi-rūḍhaṁ (mama hṛdayaṁ) - (my heart) is full of pride and arrogance; क्षन्तव्य: (kṣantavyaḥ etc. - see verse 1)

Having thus lived the tragic days of my infancy and early childhood, in time I grew up to enter my teenage youthfulness. Its vague ambitions, shapeless plans, impossible hopes, nameless hungers, and insatiable thirsts roasted my daytime hours and baked my nighttime watches. In fits and starts I worked hard, honestly hard.

Exhausted, many a time I fell back into bitter moods of total disappointment. At this age I continuously failed in every one of my undertakings — for I could never consistently keep any single goal in view and apply all my abilities continuously in one direction until achievement was ensured.

That was a time when sense organs were wild, and sensuousness in me was untamed, not yet disciplined. Mounting waves of passion, irresistible tidal waves of lust, would repeatedly wash away what little discrimination I may have had.

Soon thereafter I got caught up in an inescapable web of relationships, exhausting myself in my attempts to find at least the minimum requirements to satisfy the never-ending demands of my wife and growing children.

O Lord! May I never reach such a hopeless state wherein my vanity-ridden heart in its own self-importance would have no accommodation for thoughts of You! In such a state, there can be no end to the possibilities of confusion I would bring into my life through the compulsions of my selfishness!

In case I have committed sins in the past that might invoke such a state of bitter sorrow and utter tragedy; You must, O Lord, forgive me for them all.

Beloved Lord! Blessed Parameśvara! Whatever faults I may have committed in the past, forgive them all, O All-Merciful One!

Forgive me. Forgive me. Wholeheartedly forgive my sins in Your own grace supreme.

IV

वार्द्धक्ये चेन्द्रियाणां विगतगतिमतिश्चाधिदैवादितापैः
पापै रोगैर्वियोगैस्त्वनवसितवपुः प्रौढिहीनं च दीनम् ।
मिथ्यामोहाभिलाषैर्भ्रमति मम मनो धूर्जटेर्ध्यानशून्यम् ।
क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्रीमहादेव शम्भो ॥ ४ ॥

vārdhakye cendriyāṇāṁ vigatagatimatiścādhidaivāditāpaiḥ
pāpai rogairviyogaistvanavasitavapuḥ praudhihīnaṁ ca dīnam
mithyāmohābhilāṣairbhramati mama mano
dhūrjaṭerdhyānaśūnyam
kṣantavyo me'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhoḥ śrīmahādeva śambho

वार्धक्ये च - vārdhakye ca - and in old age; **इन्द्रियाणां विगतगतिम्** - indriyāṇāṁ vigatagatim - the one whose sense organs have lost their potential; **अतः** - ataḥ - therefore; **आधिदैवादि तापैः** - ādhidaivāditāpaiḥ - due to afflictions caused by phenomenal forces, etc. (sun, rain, cold, etc.; things and beings around me; and my own self); **पापैः** - pāpaiḥ - by sinful actions; **रोगैः** - rogaiḥ - by diseases; **वियोगैः** - viyo-

gaiḥ - by losses; तु अनवसितवपुः - tu anavasitavapuh - having a weak, emaciated body; प्रौढिहीनम् - praudhihinam - without the vigor of youth; च - ca - and; दीनम् - dīnam - distressed; मिथ्या मोहाभिलाषैः - mithyā-mohābhilāṣaiḥ - by delusions and fanciful desires; मम - mama my; मनः - manah - mind; भ्रमति - bhramati - wanders; (and) धूर्जटेः ध्यान शून्यम् - dhūrjaṭeḥ dhyāna-śūnyam - is devoid of meditating on the Lord; क्षन्तव्यः - (ksantavyaḥ etc. - see verse 1)

When the hoards of sins and excesses lived in youth and middle age had marched away, I came to the state of old age, when my sense organs became weak and all inner faculties grew dim. Both the outer phenomenal world of sensations and the inner subjective world of sentiments discovered a new courage to persecute and tyrannize me.[3] With my body smothered by diseases and my mind riddled with nameless fears, my life became truly unenviable indeed.

One by one my dear and near ones, friends, and acquaintances started leaving the world, pushing me into deeper and deeper despair. I dared not live lonely in the world, now peopled with strangers, and, yet, I was afraid to die! These inexpressible secret tensions made my old age miserable, insufferable, unendurable.

Under the continuous onslaught of painful diseases from outside and voiceless sufferings from within, my mind, living continually in its

[3]All bodily sufferings caused by the outer world are together called by a generic term, "disease of the body" (*vyādhi*); similarly, all the sorrows that arise subjectively from one's mental disturbances are called "sickness of the mind" (*ādhi*).

silent agonies and cruel tensions, grew weaker and weaker. Memories became dim and broken. My ability to think and judge gradually diminished. A very pitiable condition indeed!

Eruptions of desire continued to scorch my mind, and delusory misunderstandings burned and tortured my heart.

If, at that time, I would have had some faith in You and a little devotion toward You, O Lord, no doubt I could have brought a lot of comfort into my chaotic within. But alas! Due to the power of my negative *vāsanās* it would have then been impossible for me to remember You, O Lord, and turn my attention unto You.

O Jagadīśvara! May such a tragic state never come to me! If there should be sins in me that might invoke such terrible punishment as to make me live and suffer in such a gruesome state of old age, forgive them all, O Lord!

Beloved Lord! Dear Parameśvara! Whatever faults I may have committed in the past, forgive them all, O All-Merciful One!

Forgive me. Forgive me. May I never get condemned to fall again into the hapless sorrows of a lonely old age, neglected by all, suffering alone —a dry existence wrapped up in pain and regret.

V

नो शक्यं स्मार्तकर्म प्रतिपदगहनप्रत्यवायाकुलाख्यं
श्रौते वार्ता कथं मे द्विजकुलविहिते ब्रह्ममार्गे सुसारे ।
नास्थाधर्मे विचारःश्रवणमननयोःकिं निदिध्यासितव्यम्।
क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्रीमहादेव शम्भो ॥ ५ ॥

no śakyaṁ smārtakarma pratipadagahanapratyavāyākulākhyaṁ
śraute vārtā kathaṁ me dvijakulavihite brahmamārge susāre .
nāsthādharme vicāraḥ śravaṇamananayoḥ kiṁ nididhyasitavyaṁ
kṣantavyo me'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhoḥ śrīmahādeva śambho

न उ शक्यं - na u śakyaṁ - definitely not possible (for me); स्मार्त कर्म - samārta-karma-karma (actions) enjoined in the smrutis (ethics, codes, rituals, etc.); प्रति-पद-गहन-प्रत्यवाय-आकुलाख्यम् - prati-pada-gahana-pratyavāya-ākulākhyam - each word of which is difficult (to understand) and is endowed with the sorrow of (giving one sorrow of) the sin of omission (by nonperformance of a prescribed ritual enjoined in the Veda, a sin is accrued); द्विज कुल विहिते - dvija-kula-

vihite - which was enjoined for the twice-born; ब्रह्म मार्गे सुसारे - - brahma-märge susäre - that which leads to the path of Truth (Brahman); श्रौते - śraute - in the śruti; कथम् - katham - how; मे - me - for me; वार्ता - värtä - abiding; नास्थाधर्मे विचारः - nästhädharme vicärah - for one who is not inquiring into the nature of Truth; श्रवण-मननयोः - śravaṇamananayoḥ - listening and reflection (of Upanisadic teaching); निदि ध्यासितव्यम् किं - nididhyäsitavyam kim - (or) contemplation - how is it possible? क्षन्तव्यो - (kṣantavyo etc. - see verse 1)

Due to the sins of my past acts of commission and omission, I am too disturbed mentally to enjoy the inner peace without which the mind cannot apply itself with sincerity and enthusiasm to the worship of the Lord (*smārta-karma*). When I am incapable of regularly worshipping the Lord, in sincere devotion and with deep faith, there is no way that I can unload my *vāsanās* and retrieve my mind-and-intellect's attention from the dissipating fields of objects, emotions, and thoughts. Without the conservation of my mental and intellectual energies, my inner equipment can never be a fit instrument to soar into fields of contemplation and meditation (*śrauta-karma*).

Without an integrated mind, study of the scriptures will not be fruitful. Reflection upon the meaning of the scriptures will be impossible. My mind, then, will not be able to enter steady and continuous moods of meditation. In short, I will never be able to walk the path pursued by all seekers of *Brahman*.

To be born out of the present state of entanglement into a new state of inner beauty and

sense of holiness is indicated in all the scriptures of the world as a new birth. "Twice-born" (*dvija*) is the name given to a spiritual seeker: he is first born from his mother's womb, and the second time he must emerge out of the womb of his own mind and intellect. This second stage of his metamorphosis is a spiritual rebirth, and those who have gained it, or those who are striving for it, are called the twice-born.

When there is no clear conviction of the existence of a larger goal and purpose in life, when there is no firm and ardent belief born out of an understanding of the existence of a Universal Essence, then the individual has no system of righteous values to follow.

When healthy values of life are not lived in one's day-to-day contacts, the mind cannot be composed sufficiently even to intelligently *listen* to (*śravaṇa*) or deeply *reflect* upon (*manana*) the subtle imports of the rishis' statements. How can such an unprepared mind ever hope to gain wings of contemplation upon which to glide, in meditation, out of the present state of limitations to gain the plenitude of the unlimited and the infinite Lord Śiva?

Beloved Lord! O Jagadīśvara! Whatever faults I may have committed in the past, forgive them all, O All-Merciful One!

Forgive me. Forgive me. You are an Ocean of Mercy. I depend upon Your blessings solely.

* * * *

By a subtle technique, the great master now indicates to us the things that we should do for inner purification by listing those practices we have omitted in our lives. *In the following two verses, remembering his omissions of spiritual practice, the devotee is deeply regretful, and in so being, he mentally performs all the sacred services to the Lord that he is enumerating.*

VI

स्नात्वा प्रत्यूषकाले स्नपनविधिविधौ नाहृतं गाङ्गतोयं
पूजार्थं वो कदाचिद्बहुतरगहनात्खण्डबिल्वीदलानि ।
नानीता पद्ममाला सरसि विकसिता गन्धपुष्पे त्वदर्थम् ।
क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्रीमहादेव शम्भो ॥ ६ ॥

snātvā pratyūṣakāle snapanavidhividhau nāhṛtaṁ gāṅgatoyaṁ
pūjārthaṁ vā kadācidbahutaragahanat'khaṇḍabilvīdalāni
nānītā padmamālā sarasi vikasitā gandhapuṣpe tvadarthaṁ
kṣantavyo me'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhoḥ śrīmahādeva śambho

प्रत्यूष काले - pratyūṣa-käle - at dawn; स्नपन विधिविधौ - snapana-vidhividhau - according to the rules of bathing; स्नात्वा - snätvä - having bathed; गाङ्गतोयं - gäṅgatoyam - Ganges water; पूजार्थं - püjärtham - for worship; न आहृतं - na ähṛtaṁ - was not brought; वा vä - or; (püjärthaṁ - for worship); कदाचित् - kadäcit - even once; बहु तर गहनात् - bahu-tara-gahanät - from a thick forest; अखण्ड बिल्वीदलानि akhanda-bilvīdalani - unbroken bilva leaves; (na ahṛtaṁ - was not

brought); गन्ध पुष्पे सरसि विकसिता पद्म|माला - gandha-puspe sarasi vikasitā padma-mālā - garland of fragrant flowers and lotuses blossomed in ponds; त्वदर्थम् - tvadartham - for you; न आनीता - na ānītā - was not brought; क्षन्तव्यो - (kṣantavyo etc. - see verse 1)

I did not, at dawn, take my refreshing bath, and I did not collect at least a pot of Ganges water and approach You, O Lord, to give You a bath (*abhiṣekam*). Nor did I ever collect bilwa leaves from the forest for your worship. Alas, I did not, even once, make a garland of fresh lotus blossoms collected from the rippling lotus-tank. Neither had I the devotion to collect any fragrant flowers to offer You. What a sinner am I!

Forgive my sins, O Lord, the All-Merciful One.

Forgive me. Forgive me. Other than Your all-forgiving grace, I have no other shelter now.

Continuing to indicate the methods of worship, the teacher employs the negative method of enumerating the omissions in the seeker's life.

VII

दुग्धैर्मध्वाज्ययुक्तैर्दधिसितसहितैः स्नापितं नैव लिङ्गं
नो लिप्तं चन्दनाद्यैः कनकविरचितैः पूजितं न प्रसूनैः ।
धूपैः कर्पूरदीपैर्विविधरसयुतैर्नैव भक्ष्योपहारैः ।
क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्रीमहादेव शम्भो ॥ ७ ॥

dugdhairmadhvājyayuktairdadhisitasahitaiḥ snāpitaṁ naiva liṅgaṁ
no liptaṁ candanādyaiḥ kanakaviracitaiḥ pūjitaṁ na prasūnaiḥ
dhūpaiḥ karpūradīpairvividharasayutairnaiva bhakṣyopahāraiḥ
kṣantavyo me'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhoḥ śrīmahādeva śambho

दुग्धैः - dugdhaiḥ - by milk; मध्वाज्ययुक्तैः - madhvājya-yuktaiḥ - with honey and ghee; दधिसित सहितैः - dadhisita-sahitaiḥ - along with curd and sugar; लिङ्गं - lingaṁ - idol of Siva; स्नापितं न एव - snāpitaṁ na eva - was never washed (bathed); चन्दनाद्यैः न उ लिप्तम् - candanādyaiḥ na u liptaṁ - never annointed with sandalwood paste, etc.; प्रसूनैः - prasūnaiḥ - with flowers; कनकविरचितैः - kanakaviracitaiḥ -

with golden ornaments; न पूजितम् - na pūjitam - not worshipped; धूपैः - dhūpaiḥ - with incense; कर्पूरदीपैः - karpūradīpaiḥ - with camphor; विविधरसयुतैः भक्ष्योपहारैः - vividharasayutaiḥ bhakṣyopahāraiḥ - with many tasty foods; न एव पूजितम् - na eva (pūjitam) - (you) are not (worshipped by me); क्षन्तव्यो - (kṣantavyo etc. - see verse 1)

What a pity. When I had the chance, I did not bathe Your symbol (*Śiva-liṅga*) with honey, curd, ghee, milk, and sugar.[4] I did not adorn Your form with perfumed sandalwood. I did not worship You with flowers of Datura; I did not offer You incense; I did not show You the sacred lamp; alas, I did not burn camphor at Your feet.

Never did I get a chance to offer You fruits and eatables on golden plates. O Jagadīśvara, may such a tragedy of repeated omissions never come to me in the future.

If my omissions were prompted by my past sins, forgive them all, O Lord. Dear Auspicious One, Śambhu, whatever faults I may have committed in the past, both through commission and omission, forgive them all, O All-Merciful One.

Forgive me. Forgive me. I depend entirely upon Your mercy and grace.

Continuing to sincerely regret the omissions that he made, the seeker again falls prostrate, asking forgiveness of his beloved Lord.

[4] All these five mixed together become the "five nectars" (*pañcāmṛta*).

VIII

नग्नो निःसङ्गशुद्धस्त्रिगुणविरहितो ध्वस्तमोहान्धकारो
नासाग्रे न्यस्तदृष्टिर्विदितभवगुणो नैव दृष्टः कदाचित् ।
उन्मन्यावस्थया त्वां विगतकलिमलं शङ्करं न स्मरामि।
क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्रीमहादेव शम्भो ॥ ८ ॥

nagno niḥsaṅgaśuddhastriguṇavirahito dhvastamohändhakäro
näsägrenyastadṛstirviditabhavaguṇo naiva dṛṣṭaḥ kadäcit
unmanyävasthayä tväṁ vigatakalimalaṁ śaṅkaraṁ na smarämi
kṣantavyo me'parädhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhoḥ śrīmahädeva śambho

नग्नः- nagnaḥ - one who is naked (free from any cloth, because He is all-pervasive); निःसङ्गः - niḥsaṅgaḥ - free from attachment; शुद्धः - śuddhaḥ - pure; त्रिगुण विरहितः- triguṇa-virahitaḥ - one who is totally free from the three gunas (untouched by the gunas of Mäyä); ध्वस्तमोहान्धकारः- dhvastamohändhakärah - one who has destroyed the darkness of delusion; नासाग्रेन्यस्त दृष्टिः - näsägrenyastadrstih - one whose sight is at the root of the nose (one who is ever in contempla-

tion); विदित भव गुण: - vidita-bhava-guṇaḥ - one who knows the quality of the world; कदाचित् - kadäcit - even once; दृष्ट: न एव - dṛṣṭaḥ na eva - was not seen (understood); विगत कलिमल - vigata-kalimalaṁ - being the one whose mind has no imperfections; उन्मन्या वस्थया - unmanyävasthayä - with a state of total absorption (of devotion to You); शंकरं त्वाम् - śankaraṁ tvam - You, Sankara (one who bestows happiness to all); न स्मरामि - na smarämi - I don't think; (kṣantavyo etc. - see verse 1)

Never have I tried to become "naked" and free of all attachment, purified of all *vāsanās*. At this moment, the Self is wrapped up in the matter vestures through a delusory sense of total identification. To undress from the physical, the mental, and the intellectual sheaths is for the seeker to arrive at the naked Truth. Thus, "becoming naked" has a great significance and can be achieved when attachment to the sheaths ceases to be.

"Pure (*śuddha*) heart" is a term used, in all the religions of the world, to indicate a state of the mind-intellect equipment: a state of hushed silence, bristling with alertness and vigilance. A quiet and alert mind is a pure mind, but so long as *vāsanās* are impatient to express through the seeker's equipments, his intellect must necessarily gurgle with endless explosions of desire, which, in turn, must unavoidably bring unending agitations to the mind.

Pure inner equipment is gained only when the *vāsanās* have been exhausted through dedicated, selfless actions. O Lord, I have not achieved this yet!

Only when the seeker has cultivated a pure mind can he come out of the confusions created by his misapprehensions of the world. O Lord, I am still groping in the dark, dreary delusions of my own mind.

In my present condition, I cannot, with single-pointed attention, devotedly meditate upon Your form and Your glorious qualities. Never have I had such an experience. Through meditation alone can we reach the state of "no-mind" (*unmanyāvasthā*). Then alone can we end all our perceptions of plurality and walk away from their endless enchantments. In short, I have never continuously meditated upon You! O Śaṅkara, save me!

O Viśveśvara, may I never repeat such a tragic existence in the hereafter.

Beloved Lord, dear Jagadīśvara, whatever faults I may have committed in the past, forgive them all, O All-Merciful One.

Forgive me. Forgive me. May I not continue living my present life without faith or devotion.

In my present state of utter helplessness I can only surrender to You, demanding that, by Your blessings, my mind become pure and turn toward You, ever engaged in the pursuit of my own liberation. Hence, the following verse.

IX

चन्द्रोद्भासितशेखरे स्मरहरे गङ्गाधरे शङ्करे
सर्पैर्भूषितकण्ठकर्णविवरे नेत्रोत्थवैश्वानरे ।
दन्तित्वक्कृतसुन्दराम्बरधरे त्रैलोक्यसारे हरे
मोक्षार्थं कुरु चित्तवृत्तिमखिलामन्यैस्तु किं कर्मभिः ॥ ९ ॥

candrodbhäsitaśekhare smarahare gaṅgädhare śankare
sarpairbhūṣitakaṇṭhakarṇavivare netrotthavaiśvänare
dantitvakkṛtasundarämbaradhare trailokyasäre hare
mokṣärthaṁ kuru cittavṛttimakhilāmanyaistu kiṁ karmabhiḥ

चन्द्र उद्भासित शेखरे- candra-udbhäsita-śekhare - one whose matted locks of hair are illumined by the moon; स्मरहरे - smarahare - the destroyer of Cupid; गङ्गाधरे - gaṅgädhare - one who wears the Ganges; शंकरे - śankare - the bestower of happiness; सर्पैः भूषित कण्ठ कर्ण विवरे sarpaiḥ bhūṣita-kaṇṭha-karna-vivare - one whose neck and ears are bedecked with serpents; नेत्र उत्थ वैश्वानरे netra-uttha-vaiś-vänare - one from whose eyes fire (of Knowledge) comes out; दन्ति

त्वक् कृत सुन्दर अम्बरधरे danti-tvak-kṛta-sundara-ambaradhare - one who wears the beautiful garment made of the skin of an elephant; त्रैलोक्यसारे trailokyasāre - one who is the essence of the three worlds; हरे hare - the remover (of sins and ignorance); मोक्षार्थं mokṣārtham - for gaining liberation; अखिलाम् चित्तवृत्तिम् कुरु akhilām cittavṛttim kuru - make my mind totally available; अन्यैः anyaiḥ तु कर्मभिः किं tu karmabhiḥ kiṁ - of what use are other actions

What else is there to accomplish? Let me turn my mind's entire attention to the nature of Lord Śiva. This is the only way to liberate myself (*mokṣārtham*) from all sorrows around and agonies within.

In order to sharpen the mind's attention, before applying it in contemplation upon the formless, transcendental nature of Reality, it has been found useful to let the mind to rest upon the Lord's form. The divine forms described in Hinduism are all symbols of deep Vedantic significance. The mind is first brought to rest in devotion on an enchanting form of the Lord; as it does so, it becomes calm and serene. With emotions calmed, the intellect turns sharp and vibrant. Such a dynamic yet quiet intellect can then detect the significance of the symbol of its worship.

Lord Śiva is described fully in this verse: He, whose forehead is adorned by the crescent moon, is the destroyer of all lustful thoughts in us and is therefore called Destroyer (*Hara*); He carries the Ganges in His head, and is the sole doer of all auspiciousness (*Śaṅkara*); He is adorned with serpents round His neck and ears,

and from His eyes blazes forth fire of destruction; He, the great Hara, dressed in an elephant skin, is the real Essence behind this world of change.

O Lord, for liberation from all my delusions, make my mind pure and contemplative. Of what use is all else?

X

किं वानेन धनेन वाजिकरिभिः प्राप्तेन राज्येन किं
किं वा पुत्रकलत्रमित्रपशुभिर्देहेन गेहेन किम् ।
ज्ञात्वैतत्क्षणभङ्गुरं सपदि रे त्याज्यं मनो दूरतः
स्वात्मार्थं गुरुवाक्यतो भज भज श्रीपार्वतीवल्लभम् ॥१०॥

kiṁ vānena dhanena vājikaribhiḥ prāptena rājyena kiṁ
kiṁ vā putrakalatramitrapaśubhirdehena gehena kiṁ
jñātvaitatkṣaṇabhaṅguraṁ sapadi re tyājyaṁ manō dūrataḥ
svātmārthaṁ guruvākyato bhaja bhaja śrīpārvatīvallabham

किं वा - kiṁ vā - of what use is; अनेन धनेन - anena dhanena this wealth; वाजिकरिभिः - vājikaribhiḥ - horses and elephants; प्राप्तेन राज्येन किं - prāptena rājyena kiṁ - of what use is the kingdom that is attained; वा - vā - or; पुत्र कलत्र मित्र पशुभिः किं - putra-kalatra-mitra-paśubhiḥ kiṁ -of what use are son, wife, friend and animals; देहेन किं - dehena kiṁ - what is the use of the body; गेहेन किं - gehena kiṁ - what is the use of the house; एतत् क्षणभङ्गुरम् ज्ञात्वा - etat kṣaṇa-

bhaṅguram jnätvä - knowing all this to be perishable in a second; रे मनः - re manah - O mind; सपदि - sapadi - immediately; दूरतः - düra-taḥ - to a distance; त्याज्यं - tyäjyaṁ - to be cast away; स्वात्मार्थम् - sva-ätmärtham - for your own self (knowing yourself); गुरुवाक्यतः - guru-väkyataḥ - through the teaching of the guru; श्रीपार्वती वल्लभम् - śrîpärvatî-vallabham - the Lord of Pärvatî; भज भज - bhaja bhaja - worship

Of what use are, and what permanent joy can be provided by, many vehicles, much money, many horses and elephants? Even if an entire kingdom were made available to me to administer and rule over — so what? Neither on my deathbed nor in my life hereafter can these possessions be of any permanent value or of any enduring use.

Neither my wife, children, friends, and wealth, nor my palatial, marbled extravaganza of a house can help me in escaping from the sorrows of my mind, which is becoming hopelessly exhausted through its own agitations and restlessness.

Recognizing this fact of life, slowly withdrawing my mind from its endless quests for happiness in the world *outside*, I must train my mind to turn its entire attention to realize the Higher in me. With a mind that has "thrown away afar" all its disturbing passions for sense objects, I must approach a teacher who is constantly dwelling in the Higher state and must follow sincerely and faithfully the path indicated by him.

I must seek again!

Again must I seek that state from which both matter (*Prakṛti*) and energy (*Puruṣa*) emerge out to create for me this tantalizing world of ever-changing illusions.

Let me seek and discover the Lord of Matter, the Lord of Parvati.

XI

आयुर्नश्यति पश्यतां प्रतिदिनं याति क्षयं यौवनं
प्रत्यायान्ति गताः पुनर्न दिवसाः कालो जगद्भक्षकः ।
लक्ष्मीस्तोयतरङ्गभङ्गचपला विद्युच्चलं जीवितं
तस्मान्मां शरणागतं शरणद त्वं रक्ष रक्षाधुना ॥११॥

āyurnaśyati paśyatāṁ pratidinaṁ yāti kṣayaṁ yauvanaṁ
pratyāyānti gatāḥ punarna divasāḥ kālo jagadbhakṣakaḥ
lakṣmīstoyataraṅgabhaṅgacapalā vidyuccalaṁ jīvitaṁ
tasmānmāṁ śaranāgataṁ śaraṇada tvaṁ rakṣa rakṣādhunā

प्रतिदिनम् - pratidinam - every day; आयु:- äyuḥ - live; नश्यति - naśyati - ebbs away; पश्यतां - paśyatäm - let this be seen; यौवनम् - yauvanam - youth; क्षयम् याति - ksayam yäti - undergoes decay; दिवसा: - divasäḥ - days; गता: - gatäḥ - that are gone; पुन: - punaḥ - again; न - na - not; प्रति आयान्ति - prati äyänti - come back; काल: - kalah - time; जगद्भक्षक:- jagadbhakṣakah-is the eater of the world; लक्ष्मी: तोय तरङ्ग भङ्ग चपला - laksmîḥ toya-taranga-bhaṅga-capala - the Goddess of

Wealth is as fickle as the breaking of the wave of water; जीवितं jīvitam - life; विद्युत् चलम् - vidyut-calam - is as transient as lightning; तस्मात् - tasmat - therefore; शरणागतम् मां - śaraṇāgatam mām - me, the one who has sought refuge; शरणद - śaraṇada - out of compassion; अधुना - adhunā - right now; त्वम् - tvam - you; रक्ष रक्ष - raksa raksa - may protect.

We all realize that the life of each one of us is running out day by day. With each throb of our hearts, everyone of us is leaping toward his or her individual grave.

Our youthful beauty and intelligence, vivacity and dynamism, strength and capacities quickly run out. The time lost is lost forever; the days gone by are never more to come.

Time is the very essence of Death, which swallows and consumes everything in the world of change. Prosperity and wealth, like ripples in water, are momentary and impermanent. And life itself is as fleeting as lightning — ending in a sudden flash.

What can a person hold onto as a permanent raft to keep him afloat and safe? Lord Jagadīsvara alone is the sole Essence, which is permanent and totally dependable.

To know this is one thing; to live this knowledge in life is yet another.

Beloved Lord! Blessed Jagadisvara! Whatever faults I may have committed in my past, forgive them all, and make me leave everything and hold on to You as my sole shelter, my only raft in the open sea of life's contentions.

Bless me for this steady vision and deep devotion, O All-Merciful One!

XII

करचरणकृतं वाक्कायजं कर्मजं वा
श्रवणनयनजं वा मानसं वापराधम् ।
विहितमविहितं वा सर्वमेतत्क्षमस्व
जय जय करुणाब्धे श्रीमहादेव शम्भो ॥१२॥[5]

karacaraṇakṛtam vākkāyajam karmajam vā
śravananayanajam vā mānasam vā parādham
vihitamavihitam vā sarvametat kṣamasva
jaya jaya karuṇābdhe śrī mahādeva śambho

करचरणकृतं - kara-caraṇakrtam - done by (my) hands or feet; वाक्-कायजं कर्मजं वा - väk-käyajam karmajam vä -(or) born of the organ of speech the body or action; श्रवणनयनजं वा - śravananayanajam vä - (or) born of the eyes or ears; मानसं - mänasam vä - (or) born of the

[5]This verse is a very popular one, as we meet it in almost all hymns of Lord Śaṅkara.

mind; विहितमविहितम् - vihitamavahitam vä - (or) born of the performance of duties either enjoined or not enjoined; सर्वमेतत् अपराधम् क्षमस्व - sarvametat aparädham kṣamasva - forgive all my sins; जय जय करुणाब्धे श्री महादेव शंभो - jaya jaya karunäbdhe śri mahädeva śambho - glory unto Śrî Mahädeva, Śambhu, who is the ocean of kindness.

All mistakes arising from my actions, performed by my organs of action (such as hands or legs or organ of speech); by my sense organs of perception (such as ears or eyes); and by my mind — O Lord! all omissions in performing the good and commissions of pursuing the bad, all of them, O Parameśvara, forgive me, forgive me fully.

To act against our own convictions is sin. Very often, tempted away by enchanting sense objects, in our lust and greed our minds dash out to strive, to acquire, and to enjoy the impermanent objects of the sense world. This we often do, ignoring the warnings of our own intellect, its wisdom and wise commands. After our indulgence, the tired and exhausted mind always has to return to our bosom. Where else can the mind go? When it returns, our intellect insultingly criticizes it. Such self-insulting actions are called sins.

The desires in us and our clinging attachments to them are our "lustful urges." Seduced by them, the mind, deaf to the warnings of the intellect, rushes out to indulge in the objects of its desire and thus enjoy the gratifications of its sensuous appetites.

This mighty force of the enchanting attraction for sense objects is deified as the Love-God (*Kandarpa*). Lord Śiva had once destroyed this Cupid, the blind Bow-Man, who uses flowers for his arrows (*Kandarpa-Darpa-Hāri*). Hence Śiva is called *Hara*, Destroyer.

To save me from my own mental entanglements, forged by my own lustful identifications, I need Your forgiveness and blessings, O Lord. I glorify You and invite You into my heart.

Glory, glory! O Ocean of Mercy, Lord of Lords, the One from whom comes all auspiciousness! Forgive me. Help me to save myself from my own delusory attachments!

Notes